

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 22, 2020

The Honorable Pete Visclosky
Chairman
Subcommittee for Defense
H-4015, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Ken Calvert
Ranking Member
Subcommittee for Defense,
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Visclosky and Ranking Member Calvert:

Thank you for your continued dedication to cleaning up toxic per- and polyfluoroalkyl chemicals (PFAS) at and around military installations across the country.

Our service-members, their families and defense communities are on the front lines of PFAS contamination. As you work on the Fiscal Year 2021 Department of Defense (DoD) Appropriations Act, we urge the Subcommittee to establish a special PFAS initiative across defense accounts so that the Pentagon can more swiftly tackle the urgent public health threats posed by the PFAS contamination crisis.

Analysis of [new data](#) recently released from the Pentagon shows that 678 DoD and National Guard installations are confirmed or suspected to be contaminated with PFAS – significantly more than had been previously reported by Pentagon officials.

The National Defense Authorization Act for FY 2020 included a number of important bipartisan reforms, including phasing out the use of PFAS-based firefighting foam by 2024, restoring National Guard access to defense environmental restoration accounts in response to PFAS contamination, and expanding bio-monitoring and blood testing for individuals exposed to PFAS.

To build on the progress we have made, we propose the following provisions for inclusion in the Fiscal Year 2021 DoD Appropriations Act:

- **Increase dedicated funding for PFAS remediation in the Defense Environmental Restoration Account.** The FY 2020 DoD Appropriations bill increased funding for PFAS remediation by roughly \$200 million. On March 11, 2020, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Environment, Health, and Occupational Safety, Maureen Sullivan testified that it would cost approximately \$3 billion to fully clean up PFAS contamination at and around current and former military bases. Sec. 316 of the NDAA for FY 2020 now allows for the use

of Defense Environmental Restoration Program funds to carry out environmental remediation in response to PFOA and PFAS at National Guard facilities. But current funding levels are still inadequate to address the problem. Increasing dedicated PFAS remediation funding in FY 2021 would provide DoD the financial resources to clean up PFAS pollution, including at National Guard facilities, in a more reasonable time frame than the decades they have projected.

- **Fund the rapid development of a PFAS-free firefighting agent.** The NDAA for FY 2020 contains numerous provisions related to the development and deployment of PFAS-free firefighting agent, including a requirement that DoD publish an updated mil spec for a fluorine-free firefighting agent by January 31, 2023 and phase out the military's use of fluorinated Aqueous Film Forming Foam (AFFF) by October 1, 2024 (with the exception of shipboard use). DoD will need significant resources to ensure that a fluorine-free firefighting agent, and associated hardware, is developed and available by the deadlines Congress set in the FY 2020 NDAA. Funding to the Strategic Environmental Research and Development Program (SERDP) for development of an AFFF alternative and associated hardware should be increased.
- **Increase funding for responsible AFFF disposal and remediation and prohibit funding for the incineration of AFFF until guidance is completed.** We are concerned that DoD is rushing to [incinerate](#) legacy AFFF before new guidelines required by the FY 2020 NDAA are finalized. We urge the Subcommittee to build upon last year's defense appropriations bill by making additional funding available for the development and deployment of responsible AFFF disposal and remediation techniques, and urge the Subcommittee to include language prohibiting funds being used for the incineration of AFFF until guidance is issued pursuant to sections 7361 and 330 of the FY2020 NDAA.
- **Increase funding for research and development (R&D) into deployable PFAS destruction technologies.** As concerns grow regarding risks of incinerating AFFF and materials containing PFAS, we urge the Subcommittee to significantly increase funding for the Strategic Environmental Research and Development Program and the Environmental Security Technology Certification Program targeted toward the development of effective, deployable PFAS destruction technologies.
- **Fully fund blood testing for PFAS.** Sec. 707 of the NDAA for FY 2020 requires that active duty military firefighters have their blood tested for PFAS during annual physicals beginning October 2020. The Subcommittee should make additional funds available so that DoD can test the blood of other active duty personnel for PFAS if they believe they have been exposed and want to get tested. Service members and their families deserve to know whether their PFAS blood levels increase their risk of cancer, reproductive problems, or other diseases.
- **Fully fund the nationwide PFAS health study.** Sec. 321 of the NDAA for FY 2020 authorizes an additional \$10 million to continue the CDC study and assessment of the health impacts of PFAS exposure authorized by the NDAA for FY 2018. Where feasible, we fully support increasing funding levels for this critical study to expand the number of communities that are eligible to participate.

- **Increase dedicated funding for the investigation and cleanup of PFAS contamination within the Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Environment in the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Sustainment).** We are grateful to Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Environment Maureen Sullivan and her staff for their continued work on PFAS. It is clear that greater funding is needed within the Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Environment given the magnitude of this challenge. In particular, we hope that more funding will allow the Office to:
 - develop an online portal where service members can see if they were exposed to PFAS in drinking water while stationed at a particular base, and
 - expand investigations on and around DoD installations, including of private household wells, groundwater or surface water that may be the source of drinking water for neighboring municipalities and fire/crash training area sites.

Thank you for making addressing the PFAS contamination crisis a priority in the Fiscal Year 2021 DoD Appropriations Act.

Sincerely,



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Member of Congress



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